

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00663 060045Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4311
INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 663

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EAID NS
SUBJ: OPPOSITION FEELS LEFT OUT

REF: PARAMARIBO 388

1. WITH PARLIAMENT STILL IN THE MIDST OF ITS MARATHON DEBATE
(WHICH BEGAN ON APRIL 6) OVER PRIME MINISTER ARRON'S MARCH
15 POLICY STATEMENT, OPPOSITION LEADER JAGGERNATH LACHMON
HAS EXPRESSED HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ARRON GOVERNMENT'S
VISION AND POLICIES AND REPROACHED THE GOVERNMENT FOR
IGNORING A LARGE SEGMENT OF SURINAM'S POPULATION. LACHMON'S
SPEECH, DELIVERED IN PARLIAMENT ON MAY 3, WAS NOTEWORTHY
FOR ITS MEASURED AND "BUSINESSLIKE" TONE IN CONTRAST TO EARLIER
OPPOSITION BEHAVIOR WHICH WAS CHARACTERIZED BY A SURINAMESE
VERSION OF FILIBUSTERING, INCLUDING SPEECHES RUNNING TEN TO FIFTEEN
HOURS THROUGH THE EARLY HOURS OF SEVERAL MORNINGS, AND
ANTAGONISTIC PERFORMANCES (IN THE LITERAL SENSE) WHICH
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LED TO SEVERAL OPPOSITION MEMBERS BEING EXPELLED FROM
THE CHAMBER OR PREMATURE RECESSES BEING CALLED BY THE
CHAIRMAN.

2. THE THRUST OF LACHMON'S REMARKS WAS DIRECTED AT WHAT
HE TERMED EFFORTS BY THE GOVERNMENT TO LEAVE THE OPPOSI-

TION OUT OF ITS PLANS FOR SURINAM. ASSERTING THAT THE
OPPOSITION (WHICH IS DOMINATED BY LACHMON'S PREDOMINANTLY
HINDUSTANI-BASED UNITED REFORM PARTY) IS READY TO COOPERATE
WITH THE MOBILIZATION OF SURINAM'S PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (ONE OF ARRON'S CURRENT SLOGANS),
LACHMON DECLARED THAT THIS REQUIRED ALSO THAT THE OPPOSITION
BE REGARDED AS FULL-FLEDGED PARTICIPANTS AND NOT AS SECOND
CLASS CITIZENS.

3. LACHMON SAID HE WAS DISAPPOINTED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S
POLICY STATEMENT WHICH HE SAID OFFERED NO NEW VISION AND
SHOWED NO EVIDENCE AS TO HOW THE GOVERNMENT HOPED TO
MOBILIZE THE PEOPLE. HE ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF A LACK
OF PLANNING, OF FRITTERING AWAY THE PROCEEDS OF THE BAUXITE
LEVY WHICH WERE INTENDED FOR DEVELOPMENT USES, AND OF
CONCENTRATING TOO MUCH OF ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN WEST
SURINAM WHILE NEGLECTING SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS ELSEWHERE.

4. COMMENT: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON ARRON'S POLICIES IS NOT YET
OVER, WITH TWO MORE ROUNDS OF SPEECHES AND QUESTIONS
SCHEDULED, ALTHOUGH THESE MAY BE SHORTER THAN THE FIRST.
SO FAR, ONLY SIGNIFICANT PROPOSAL IS TO COME OUT OF THE
OPPOSITION IS FOR REFORM OF SURINAM'S ELECTROAL SYSTEM
WHICH IN THEIR VIEW IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY DEMOCRATIC
INASMUCH AS ARRON'S GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE WITH LESS
THAN HALF THE TOTAL POPULAR VOTE AND BY WINNING SEATS IN
DISTRICTS WHERE FEWER NUMBERS OF VOTES ARE NEEDED TO ELECT
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A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT. NONE OF THIS, HOWEVER, IS LIKELY
TO PRODUCE ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ARRON'S POLICIES OR
PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE.
ZURHELLEN

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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